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Treatise

on

Cholera Infantum

by

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of

Virginia

1.
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Letter

From Jackson

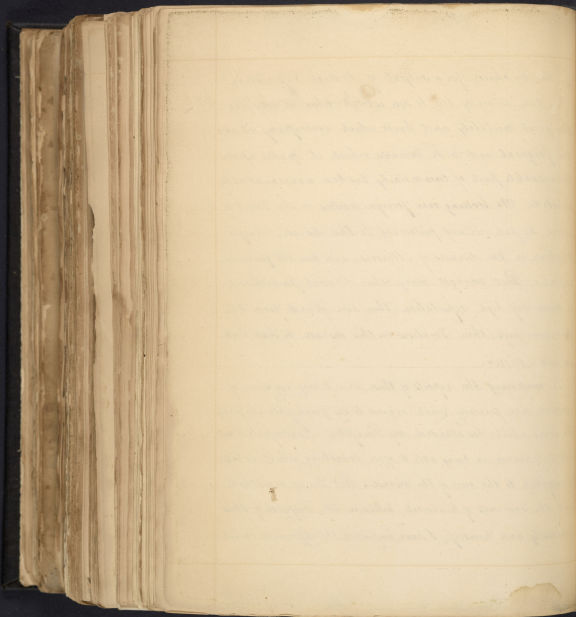
to John Smith

1856

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In my choice for a subject of Medical Dissertation, I have been naturally led to one, which, when we consider the great mortality and havoc which accompany it, and the frequent and wide incursions, which it makes upon the infantile part of Community, has been unaccountably neglected. In looking over foreign writers on the bowels of children, we find nothing pertaining to this disease, except Alghoan on the diseases of Minors, and then it is quite imperfect. But amongst many other Medical productions, of deservedly high reputation, there have issued from the American press, three Treatises on this disease, by Rush, Lockman and Miller.

In comparing the reports of these, and I may say those of medical men generally, (with regard to its great fatality) with the ~~few~~ which has attended my Practise, I anticipated not a little pleasure, in being able to offer something, which is better adapted to the cure of the disease. But having recently learned the sameness of treatment, between the Professors of this University and himself, I have imputed the difference in its

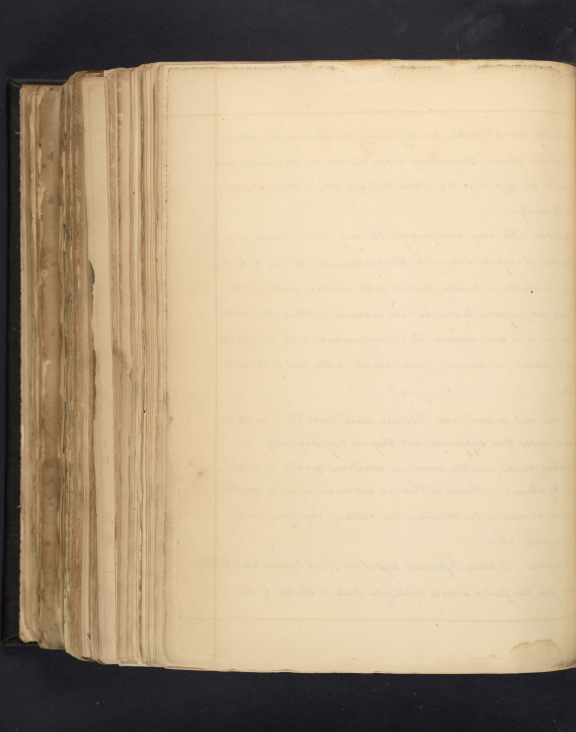


notably, not altogether to a difference in the curative plan,
but to the greater malignancy of the disease in the heated and
impure air of a large City, than that of a small Borough, and
its Vicinity.

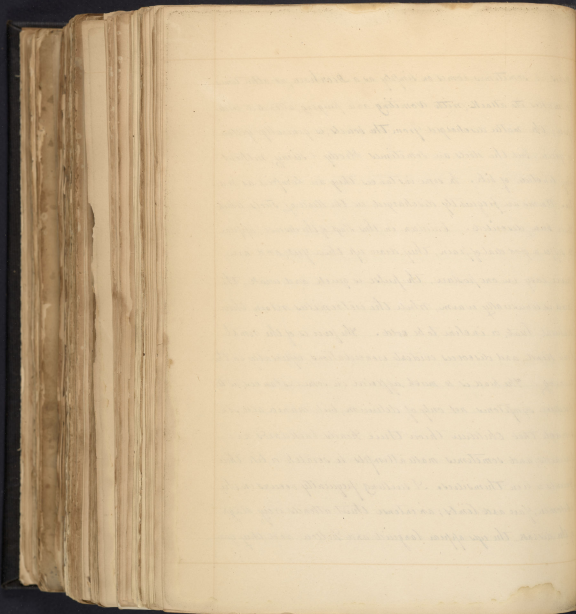
Cause. The chief and perhaps the only remote cause, is a
foul and impure state of the Atmosphere, whether this be heat-
dew, or whether it be only essential, to the existence of this state,
I am not prepared to say; but am inclined to think the latter;
however it is well known, that the foulness and malignity
of the disease, is generally proportionate, to the heat of the wea-
ther.

Proximate, diet or dietition, I believe never from the remote
cause, as has been supposed; but they are very frequently the
exciting causes, and the disease is sometimes greatly aggrava-
ted by them. Added to them, are all irregularities in diet-
and sudden changes in the weather, bad clothing, improper food,
green fruit &c.

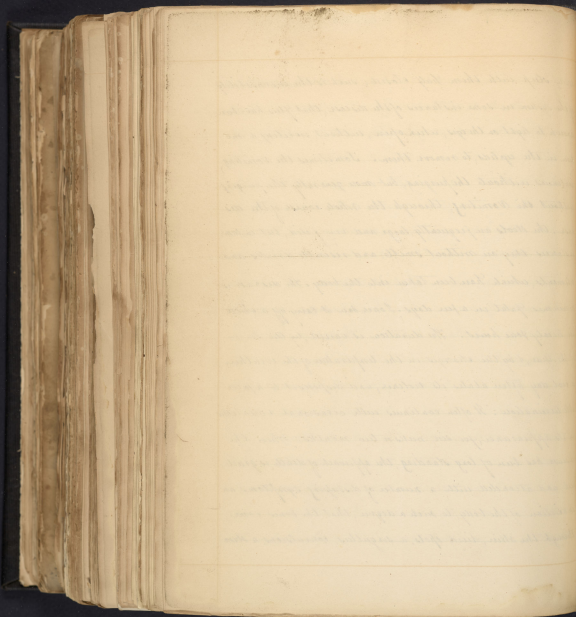
Symptoms. *Cholera Infantum* says Doct. Rush, "affects child-
ren from the first or second week after birth, to the age of two



ward, it sometimes comes on simply as a Diarrhoea, at other times
it makes its attack, with Vomiting and purging, attended with
fever; the matter discharged from the bowels, is generally yellow
or green, but the stools are sometimes bloody & slimy, without
any tenues of bile. In some instances they are limpid as wa-
ter. Worms are frequently discharged in the Head of Stools, which
have been described. Children in this stage of the disease, appear
to suffer a good deal of pain, they draw up their feet, and are
never easy in one posture, the pulse is quick and weak, the
head is unusually warm, while the extremities retain their
natural heat, or incline to be cold. The fever is of the remit-
tent kind, and discovers evident exacerbations, especially in the
evening. The head is so much affected in some instances, as to
produce symptoms not only of delirium, but mania also, in
some that children throw their heads backwards and
forwards, and sometimes make attempts to scratch or bite their
parents or even themselves. A swelling frequently occurs in the
abdomen, face and limbs; an intense thirst attends every stage
of the disease. The eyes appear sanguine and hollow, and they gen-



usually sleep with them half closed; such is the insensibility
of the system in some instances of the disease, that glass has been
known to light on the eyes, when open, without exciting a mo-
tion in the eyelids, to remove them. Sometimes the vomiting
continues without the purging, but more generally the purging
without the vomiting, through the whole course of the dis-
ease. The stools are frequently large and very felid, but in some
instances they are without smell, and resemble dristies and
aliments, which have been taken into the body. The disease is
sometimes fatal in a few days. I once saw it carry off a child
in twenty four hours. The duration is varied, by the season
of the year, & by the changes in the temperature of the weather,
a cool day often abates its violence, and disposes it to a per-
ceptible termination. It often continues with occasional variations
in its appearance, for six weeks or two months. When the
disease has been of long standing, the approach of death is grad-
ual, and attended with a number of distressing symptoms, an
exhaustion of the body, to such a degree, that the bones come
through the skin, livid spots, a singultus, convulsions, a stertor

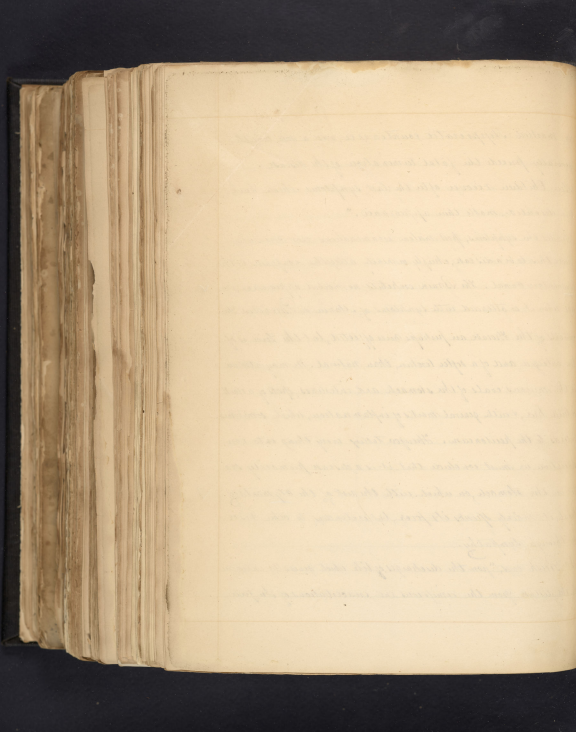


gly marked Hippocratic countenance, and a few months
generally precede the fatal termination of the disease.

See Children recover after the last symptoms which have
been described, make their appearance."

Besides the symptoms, post-mortem examinations most certainly
prove this, to be a disease, chiefly or nearly altogether confined, to the
alimentary canal. The Brain exhibits no morbid appearance, ex-
cept when it is attended with symptoms of Mania or Epilepsy. The
contents of the Stomach, are perhaps never affected, but the Liver is of-
ten enlarged, and of a softer texture, than natural. We may also see
on the mucous coats of the stomach and intestines, spots of a dark
redish hue, & with general marks of inflammation, which sometimes
extends to the peritoneum. Hence, taking every thing into con-
sideration, we must conclude that it is a disease primarily sta-
ted in the Stomach, on which with the rest of the alimentary
canal, it mainly spends its force, but extending to other vis-
cera through sympathy.

Dr Rush says, "from the discharges of bile which generally intro-
duce the disease, from the remissions and exacerbations of the fever,

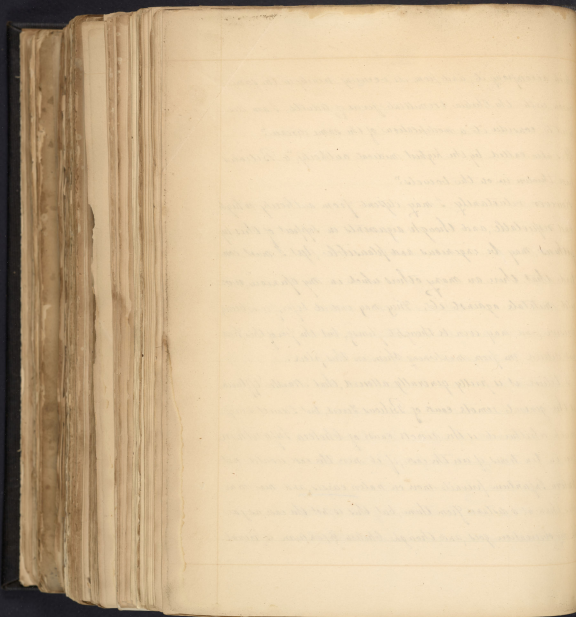


which accompany it, and from its occurring nearly in the same season, with the Cholera & remittent fevers of adults, I am disposed to consider it a modification of the same disease."

It is also called by the highest medical authority, "a Bilious fever thrown in on the bowels."

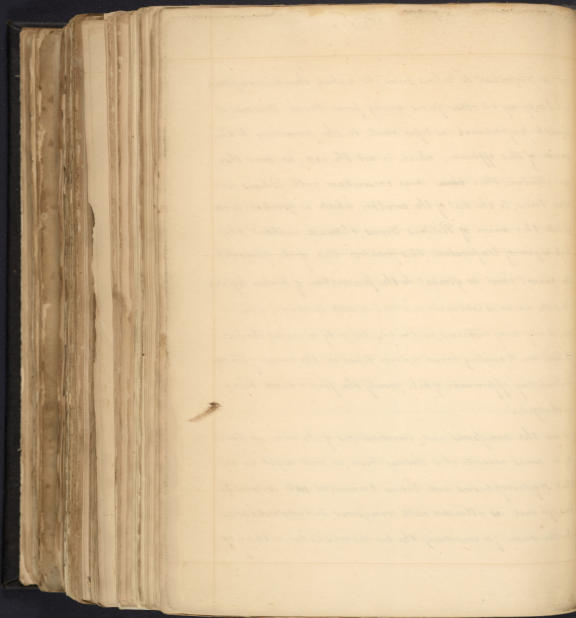
However reluctantly I may dissent from authority so high and respectable, and though arguments in support of this hypothesis, may be ingenious and plausible, yet I must contend that there are many others which in my opinion, would militate against it. They may indeed be far from being decisive, and may even be thought flimsy, but the fear of this, has not deterred me from mentioning them in this place.

I believe it is pretty generally allowed, that Marsh Effluvia is the general remote cause of Bilious Fevers, but I doubt very much whether it is the remote cause of Cholera Infantum, even in ten times, if not the case, if it were the case, would not Cholera Infantum prevail more on valley curses, and near marshes, than at a distance from them, but this is not the case, as far as my observation goes, and though Cholera Infantum is preval-



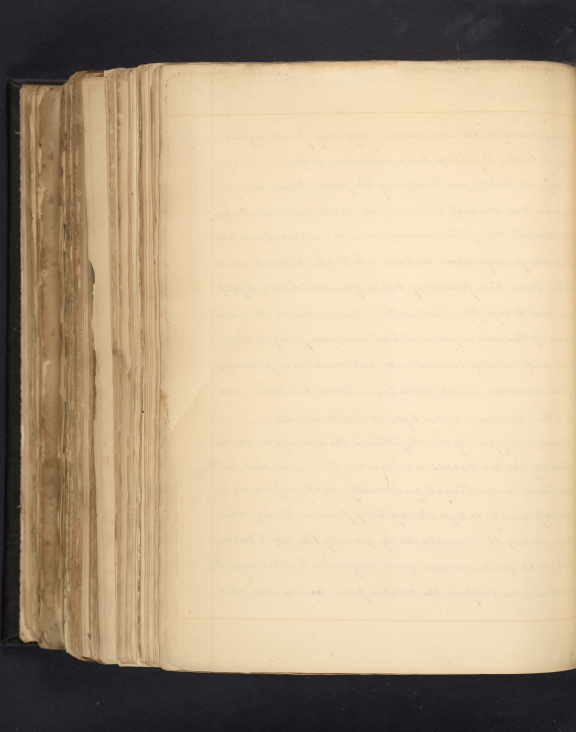
not in proportion to Bilious Fevers, (but to which there are exceptions)
and I may say all other fevers, arising from Marsh Miasma, it
should be proportionate as before said, to the proximity to the
source of this effluvia, which is not the case, we must there-
fore attribute their ~~then~~ near coexistence with Bilious and
other Fevers, to the heat of the weather, which is essential to con-
stitute this source of Bilious Fevers, ~~likewise~~ without this
high degree of temperature, this peculiar state of the Atmosph-
ere cannot exist, so essential to the production of bilious Disorders.
That the disease is introduced or attended with discharges of bile in
very a very many instances, in the country is by no means the case,
I have seen Vomiting occur a dozen times in the course of the day,
without any appearance of bile, merely the food & drink being
discharged.

From the remissions and exacerbations of the fever, we shall
by no means consider it a Bilious Fever, as well might we say
that Hydrocephalus and Scabies Verminea were Bilious Fe-
vers, for each is attended with remissions and exacerbations.
Another reason for considering the two diseases as one, is their co-



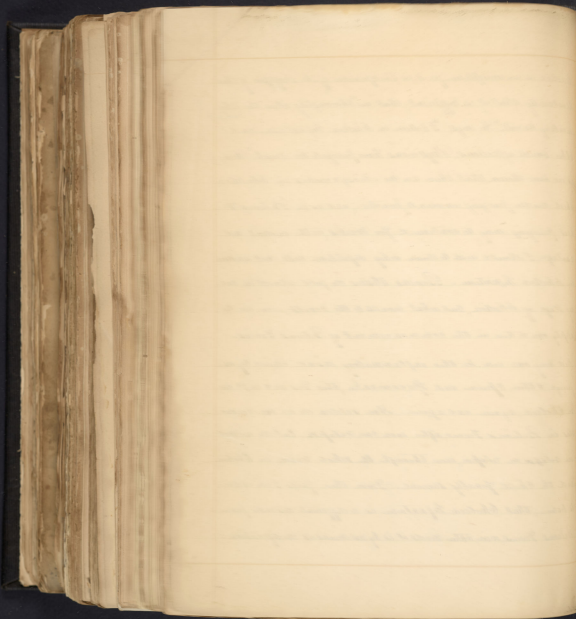
coming nearly in the same season. I say nearly, for the appear-
ance of Cholera Infantum, being antecedent to Bilious Fevers,
is imputed to "the constitution of the former, being more pre-
disposed from weakness, to be acted on by the remote causes of
the disease": but if this reasoning were not fallacious, would not
this same predisposition continue whilst the Bilious and
other Fevers are prevailing, but in often see Cholera Infant-
um cease to rage, before Bilious Fever has commenced its march;
again if this were a fact, would not this same predisposition
exist under all other circumstances and conditions, for example
I have never seen Intermittent Fevers, attack Children a mon-
th or two, or not even a day before it attacks adults.

Again, in support of this Hypothesis, the sameness in the ex-
istence of the two diseases is adduced. It is a fact that Bil-
ious Fevers in our Climate, are generally highly inflammatory
and imperiously call for the depleting plan, as bleeding, Vom-
iting, purging &c. it is also pretty generally the case I believe,
that in the greater number of the complaints of Children ~~for~~
purgatives alone, comprise the curative plan, ~~as in the case of~~ that



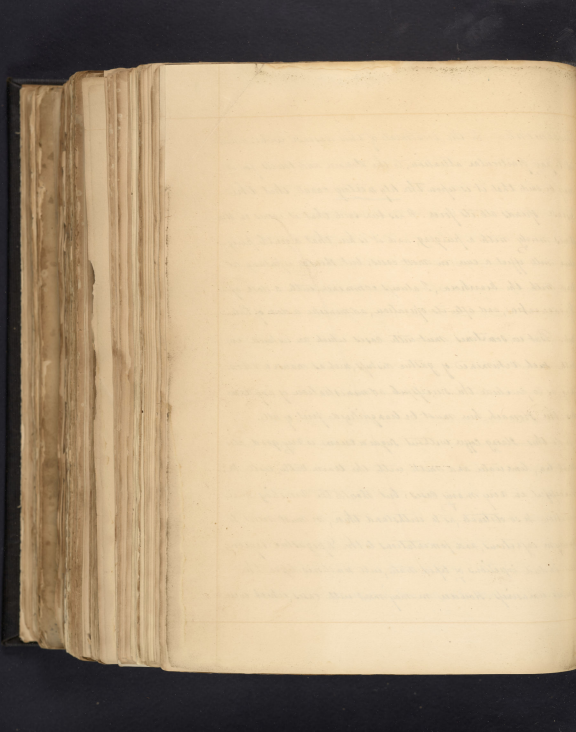
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Cholera is an exception, for it is the opinion of the Professors of this
University, that it is sufficient that in "thoroughly clear the Al-
imentary Canal," he says, "I believe in Cholera Infantum, and
other bowel affections, Physicians have purged too much," Now
as we have shown, that there are no idiosyncrasies in Children
which render purging unwarranted practice, and as in Bilious Fe-
vers, purging may be continued for weeks, with evident ad-
vantage, I should wish to know why depletion will not answer
in Cholera Infantum. Besides this is no good almost in ev-
ery stage of Cholera, but what would be the result, even we to
apply one or two in the commencement of Bilious Fevers.

Did any one ever see this inflammatory disease cured by ex-
purgs & then Opium and Spicacuanha, this has and will cu-
re Cholera, again and again. How seldom do we see recu-
rres in Bilious Fevers, after even one relapse, but do we not
see relapse on relapse, even through the whole season in Cholera
and the Child finally survives. From these facts I am induced
to believe, that Cholera Infantum is a different disease from
Bilious Fevers, or in other words it is by no means its modification.

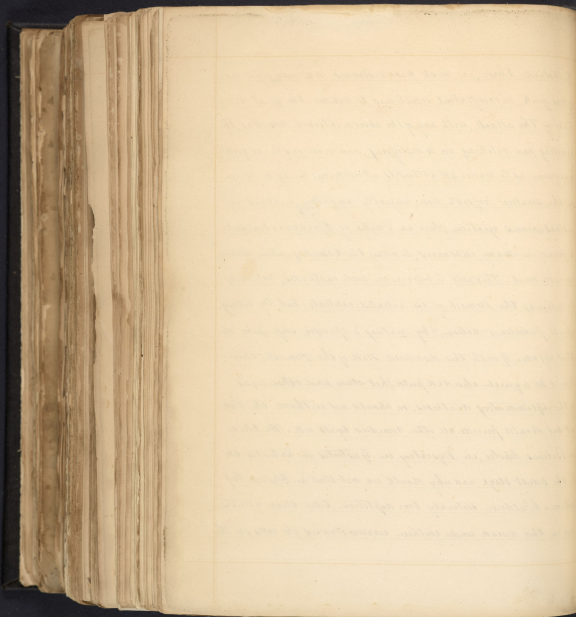


Treatments. In the treatment of this disease, we are always led to pay particular attention, to the stomach and bowels, for it may be said that it is upon the lly mesenteric canal, that the disease spreads all its force. It has been said that it comes on sometimes mostly with a purging, and it is here, that a gentle purgative will effect a cure in most cases; but should a purging attend, with the diarrhoea, I always commence with a dose of Opoeacanthra, and after its operation, administer a dose of Colomb. But in sometimes met with cases which are ushered in with such violence of gastric distress, such as nausea & vomiting, as to preclude the successful administration of any remedy; the stomach here must be tranquilized first of all.

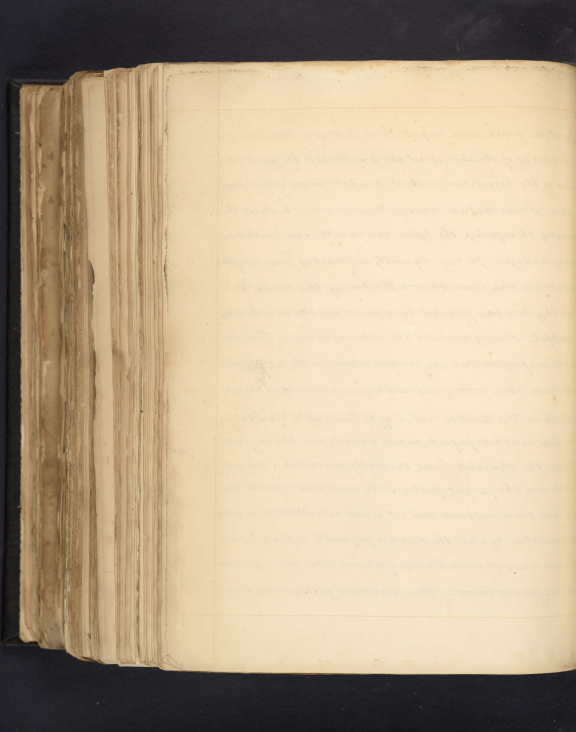
To do this strong coffee without sugar or cream is very good, also mint tea, lemonade and milk, with the warm bath, will be successful in very many cases; but should the vomiting and irritation be so obstinate, as to withstand them, we must resort to anodyne injections, and fomentations to the Epigastric Region; and indeed injections of tepid water, will sometimes lessen the gastric uneasiness. However we may meet with cases, which even



Withstand then, in such circumstances we may find ourselves quite uncomfortable sometimes, to subdue the great violence of the attack, with any of the above mentioned remedies, the Vomiting and retching are so distressing, and recurring in so quick succession, as to render all attempts at administering a purge in the smallest possible dose, perfectly nugatory, without its instantaneous operation; here an Emetic of Ipecacuanha will be found in many instances, to allay the Vomiting, when nothing else will do it. This acts I believe in such instances, not only by relieving the stomach of its vitiated contents, but by setting up its peculiar action, & by making a specific impression on that organ. If with this disordered state of the stomach, there should be a quick choroid pulse, hot skin, and other signs of the inflammatory diathesis, we should not withhold the Laxative, but should precede all other remedies by its use. We bleed in Bilious Cholera, in Dysentery, in Gastritis, in Enteritis &c in the acute stage, and why should we not bleed in Cholera Infantum. Children certainly bear depletion, better than adults, and in this disease under certain circumstances, she calls for the



Secret, are much more urgent, for it is obvious that their ge-
 neral debility of structure, is not able to withstand the great im-
 pulses of the circulation, without manifest danger of disorgan-
 ization, or some material injury. It will be found to effect the
 something tranquillizing the system, and under the care much more
 easily managed, for very frequently our remedies prove comple-
 tely abortive, when administered without using this means, but
 had they have been preceded by it, would have been as certainly
 successful. Having composed the stomach, we should then re-
 sort to some purgative medicine, and of all cathartics is the best to begin
 with, from three to six grains may be given, according to the age
 of the child, this should be washed off by Castor oil or Epsom Salts,
 the latter ought to be preferred, in case generally find this sufficient
 to clear the Alimentary Canal thoroughly, and that it is not pre-
 judicial to carry the purging farther. We should then resort to Cal-
 omel and Gummi in small doses, it is well calculated to do away
 that irritation, by which the disease is frequently kept up, and a
 biliousness carries off a accumulation of bile and other foul mathe-
 rial may have collected. There is another quality, which then

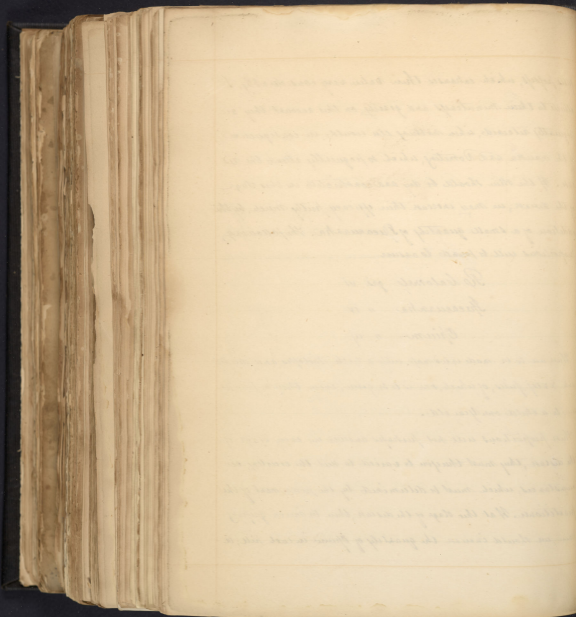


pills possess, which enhances their value very considerably, I allude to their minuteness and gravity, on this account they are frequently retained, when nothing else would, in consequence of the nausea and vomiting, which so frequently attend the disease. If the stool should be dry and constricted in this stage of the disease, we may increase their efficacy pretty much, by the addition of a small quantity of *Spicecassia*. The following proportions will be found to answer.

R Rosaceae gr. vi
S Spicecassia " iv
O Opium " ii

These are to be made into mass, with a little Molasses, and divided into XVIIij pills, of which, one is to be given, every three or four hours, to a child and five or six to an adult.

These proportions will not perhaps answer in every stage of the disease, they must therefore be varied to suit the existing circumstances, which must be determined by the judgement of the practitioner. If at this stage of the disease, there be much griping pain, we should increase the quantity of Opium in each pill, or

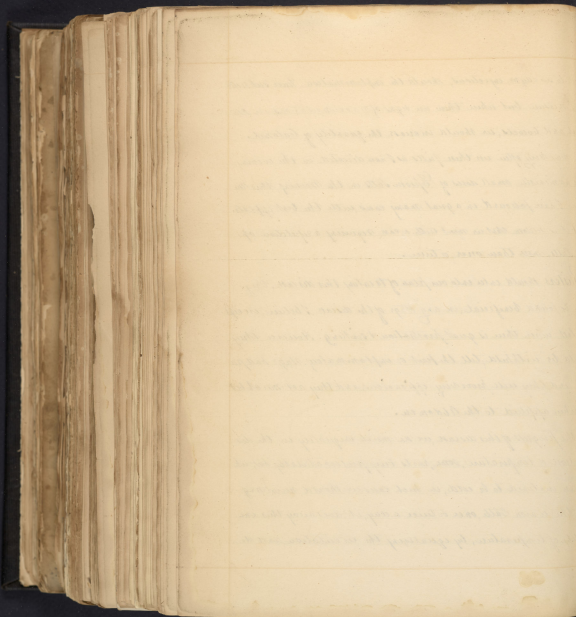


ment to an edema intestinale, should the inflammation have subsided
in a measure, but when there are signs of great accumulations in the
stomach and bowels, we should increase the quantity of Calomel.

We may very often use these pills as I have directed in the evening,
and administer small doses of Elix. Sals in the Morning, this me-
thod I have followed in a great many cases with the best effects.
But it is seldom that we meet with a case requiring a repetition of
the Salls, more than once or twice.

Risters should enter into our plan of treating this disease, they
will be found beneficial, in any stage of the disease I believe, except
the last, when there is great prostration & sinking. However they
should be withheld, till the first or inflammatory stage has pa-
ssed and they will prove very efficacious, and they act much bet-
ter when applied to the Abdomen.

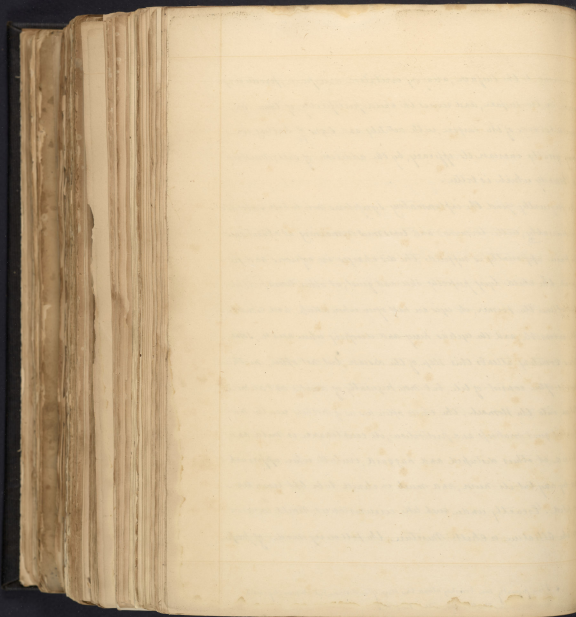
In the progress of this disease, we see much inequality in the dis-
tribution of temperature, some parts being putrefactively hot, ^{others}
are inclined to be cold, in such cases we should never neg-
lect the warm bath, once or twice a day, it does away this ine-
quality of temperature, by equalizing the circulation, and de-



turning to the surface, allaying irritation and pain, producing
again on the surface, and rouses the child perfectly, if there be
much eczema of the surface, with debility and signs of wasting, we
may greatly increase its efficacy, by the addition of Saff, Mustard,
or Brandy which is better.

We frequently find the inflammatory symptoms now, to have subsided
considerably, with toema and tenismus remaining, at other times
no pain apparently is suffered, the discharges are copious and fre-
quent, the child lying perfectly still and quiet, at other times fretful,
but of late the former, its eyes are half open when asleep, and some-
times insensible, and the eyelids heavy and drooping when awake, some-
times vomiting attends this stage of the disease, but not often, neither
and it often consists of bile, but more frequently of duels and elements
taken into the stomach, the child often lies as if nothing was the mat-
ter, but great weakness and prostration, its countenance is mild and
pale, at other disturbed and haggard, irritable when approach-
ed by any but its nurse, and much inclined to be left uninter-
rupted. Exactly under such like circumstances, should we resort
to the Alkaline or Chalk Mixture; the following mode of prep-

* I have frequently seen vomiting attend this stage of the disease, but it generally arises
from vomiting the stomach with food &c.



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which is the test which I then use run —

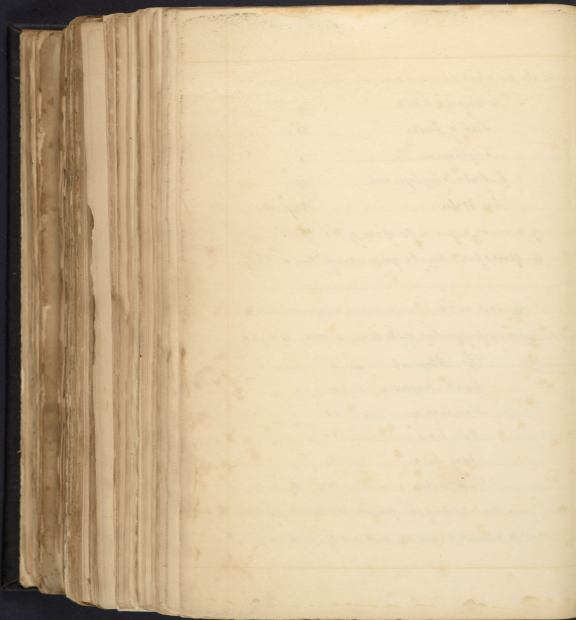
℞ Prepared Chalk	ʒij
Salt of Tartar	ʒi
Laudanum	ʒi
℥. Mace & Loaf Sugar each	ʒij
Pure Water	℥viij ℥

To this may be added a few drops of any of the *spiritual oils*, and two tea spoons full, may be given every two or three hours.

The spirit Rheubarb will be found to answer very well in these cases, & the following preparation of the same medicine, is highly recommended —

℞ Rheubarb	grs x
Calc. Magnesia	o xxx or xlv
Laudanum	ptij xv
Oil Anis.	vi
Loaf Sugar	ʒi
Pure Water	℥ij ℥

But when from irritability of the Stomach, the medicines mentioned will not be retained, & there are indications of much acidity,



in the kind of, we may resort to a mixture of Eyster lye and
Lime water, with the best effect sometimes, the following
is the mode of preparing it.

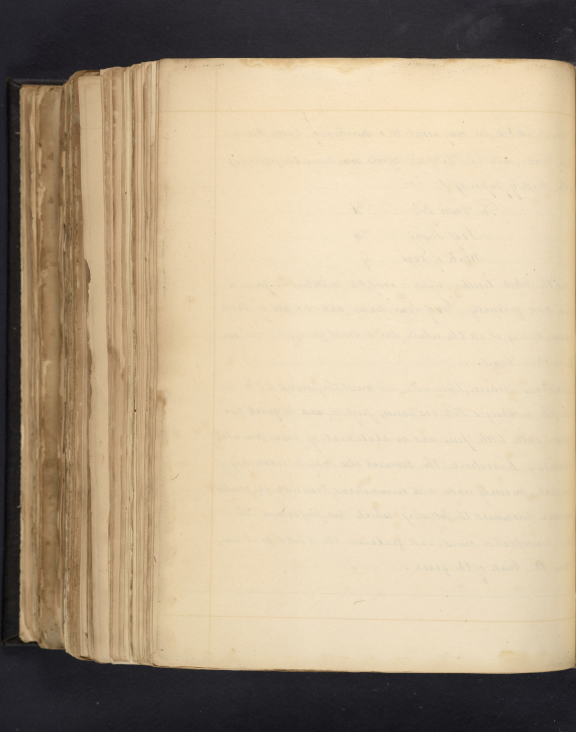
R^y. Eyster lye ℥i

Loaf Sugar ℥ij

Milk of Eggs ij

Mix the whole together, until a complete mixture is formed,
then add gradually 3vj of Lime water, and xx gtt. of Laud-
erum, stirring it all the while, dose a small spoonfull, every
two or three Hours.

Sometimes however, there will not arise the progress of the dis-
ease, the discharges still continuing profuse, and in quick suc-
cession, with little pain, and an abatement of pain, somewhat
resembling Diarrhoea; the stomach also may be exceedingly
irritable, precisely under such circumstances, I use with the greatest
confidence the following, which has performed the
most unexpected cures, and gratified the child, as it were
from the brink of the grave.



Op. Toasted R. Rubarb $\frac{2}{3}ij$

Spirits of Nuts-horn grs 120

Calc. Magnesia & G. Kino each $\frac{2}{3}ss$

Laudanum " 50

Loos. Sagae $\frac{2}{3}ij$

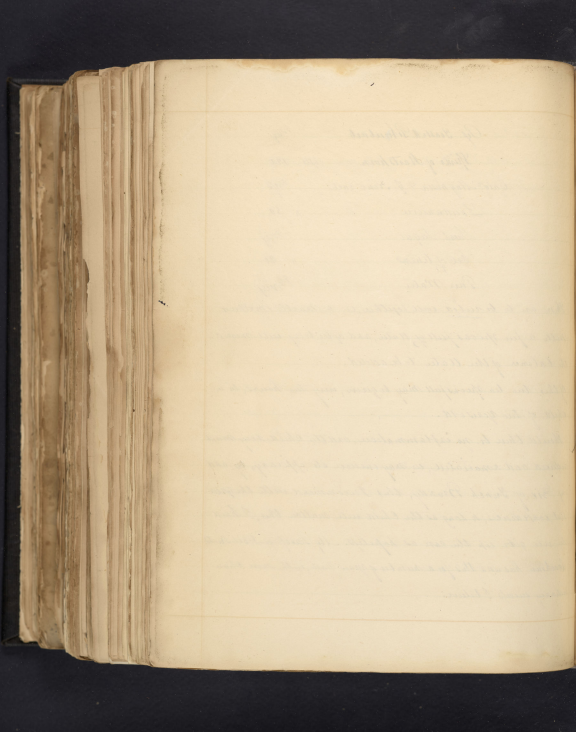
Oil of Anise " 20

Pur. Water $\frac{2}{3}viij$

These are to be mixed well together, in a Marble mortar
with a few Spoonfulls of Water, and after being well mixed,
the balance of the Water to be added.

Of this, two tea Spoonfulls may be given, every two hours, to a
child of two years old.

Should there be no inflammation, and the child very much
reduced and emaciated, we may increase its efficacy, by add-
ing $\frac{2}{3}ij$ of French Brandy, this I recommend with the great-
est confidence, so long as the child will swallow this, I hard-
ly can give up the case as hopeless. My Disciple Doct. Richd.
Cochrane has and thus for a number of years past, with more than
ordinary success I believe.



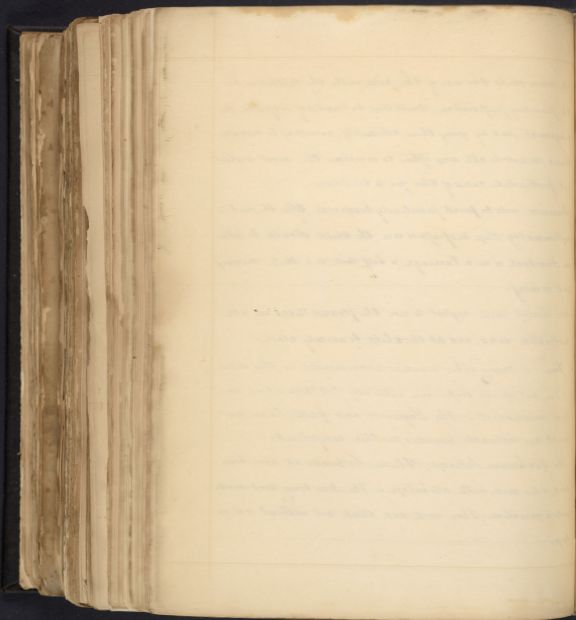
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He never omits the use of the pills, with the Aethalon or
the preceding preparation, should there be marks of Hepatic dis-
arrangement, and by giving them alternately, according to circum-
stances, must be able very often to overcome the most violent
and protracted cases of this form to children.

Exercise will be found peculiarly beneficial, After the first or
inflammatory stage has passed over, the Child should be taken
on Horseback or in a Carriage, a half mile or a mile morning
and evening.

We should never neglect to use the flannel Roller in all
protracted cases, and let the Child be warmly clad.

There are many other remedies recommended in this disease
I have not much experience with any, but those which have
been mentioned. The Logwood and Galls, I have no
doubt are valuable remedies, in this complaint.

The Saccharum Saturni, Alum, Colombo &c have been
used, & is said with advantage. The Dew berry root made
into a decoction, I have used, and think not without ad-
vantage.



The diet in this like all other inflammatory disease, should be of the lightest kind, in the commencement.

The very best is breast milk, a Rice water and Milk, Tea, sweetened Milk and Water &c

In the more advanced stage, they may be allowed thickened milk, crackers pulverized, and boiled with milk, with the addition of Loaf Sugar, and Nut Meg. And in the more protracted cases still, I have seen the best effects, derived from allowing the Child salt Ham, salt Fish, Mince and the Spirit-debited little water sweetened with sugar.

Alimentary

Quint